Paddy Crop in Belgaum Taluk.

*Q.—162. Sri N. O. SAMAJI (Belgaum-II).—

Will the Government be pleased to state :—

(*a*) whether they are aware that every year heavy damages are caused to paddy crop in Belgaum Taluk by floods of the Bellary Nala in rainy season ;

(*b*) how much area is thus damaged and how much yield is affected thereby annually ;

(*c*) whether any scheme to prevent this damage has been prepared ; and if so, when and what is the estimated cost ;

(*d*) when that scheme would be implemented ;

(*e*) whether it is a fact that the cultivators in that area have been representing the matter to the Government and if so, since when ?

A.—Sri M. V. KRISHNAPPA (Minister for Revenue).—

(*a*) Yes.

(*b*) The extent of land annually affected and the value of crops damaged are as follows :—

		S. Nos.	Area A—G
1	Survey Nos. affected and their total area in the villages of Belgaum, Vadgaon, Madhavapur, Angol and Rajagaon.	288	580—05
2	Area sown under paddy crop.		580—05
3	Area affected under paddy crop		244—31
4	Approximate value of the paddy crop damaged.		Rs. 23,642.

(*c*) A scheme at a cost of Rs. 12.50 lakhs was at first thought of but this scheme has been dropped as it is found not feasible.

(*d*) Does not arise in view of reply to clause (*c*).

(*e*) The cultivators have been representing the matter to Government since 1950.

Calling attention to a matter of Urgent Public importance *Re* : Accidental fire in a cracker shop at Channapatana.

Sri B. J. LINGE GOWDA (Channapatna).—I beg to call the attention of the Hon'ble Home Minister to an accidental fire in a cracker shop at Channapatana on 16th October 1965 resulting in serious injury to three persons of whom one is reported to have died to-day and the death of three other persons of an adjacent shop.

† Sri M. V. RAMA RAO (Minister for Home).—Sir, I wish to make the following statement in regard to the facts pertaining to this fire :

There was an accidental fire in Channapatna on 16th October 1965 at about 9-30 A.M. as a result of which four persons have died and three persons suffered injuries. The fire was first noticed in the shop of one Ashok Kumar which is one of five shops located in a building known as Sri Vasavi Building in M. G. Road, Channapatna, belonging to the Kannikaparameswari Temple. On seeing that the fire spread rapidly Ashok Kumar and Sathyanarayana Guptha who were in the shop rushed out. They are said to have suffered mild electric shock and escaped with minor injuries. However, the persons who were in the cloth shop adjacent to it were suffocated by fumes and could not get out. Gokul Murthy, Sampathkumar, Ramesh and Krishnamurthy who were in the cloth shop of Narayana Setty were suffocated by fumes. Gokul Murthy and Sampathkumar died on the spot while Ramesh died on the way to the Hospital. Krishnamurthy who was injured was treated in the Victoria Hospital, Bangalore, and discharged on 20th October 1965. But he died while he was being brought back in a taxi to Channapatna by his sister. Besides Ashok Kumar and Sathyanarayana Guptha, S. Narayana Setty, Merchant, Channapatna Town, was also injured. They were all treated in the Hospital.

The local people and Home Guards residing nearby assisted in putting down the fire and effectively prevented it from spreading. The Police also came to the spot very soon and saw that there was no pilferage of the goods which were thrown out of the shops in order to prevent them from being burnt and later the articles were returned to the original owners.

The Assistant Engineer, Mysore State Electricity Board and the Assistant Inspector of the Government Electrical Inspectorate, Bangalore, inspected the scene on 16th October 1965 and 17th October 1965, respectively. The Inspector of Explosives, South Circle, Madras, also inspected the premises on 20th October 1965. The fire may have been caused by electrical short-circuiting or by spontaneous ignition of crackers by friction. It appears that Bellulli Pataki which has a tendency to explode spontaneously by friction was also stocked in the shop. The exact cause of the fire however has yet to be determined.

It is ascertained that Ashok Kumar who had stocked the crackers for sale had no valid licence to stock and sell crackers. Originally, a licence had been issued to him for this purpose and this was renewed up to 16th November 1964. He had applied for renewal of the licence to the Deputy Commissioner, Bangalore, on 15th October 1965. But the licence had not been renewed. Action is being taken against him for stocking for sale of crackers without a licence.

The total damage caused is estimated at about Rs. 9,000. None of the shop keepers involved possessed any fire insurance. A case in Cr. No. 125/65 in the Channapatna Town Police Station has been registered and is under investigation.